

Ogni Suono saxophone duo to perform on Syndicate series

by Mike Telin



When saxophonists Noa Even and Phil Pierick formed Ogni Suono in 2009, they were faced with a dilemma. “There’s not a lot of repertoire for saxophone duo,” Noa Even said during a recent telephone conversation.

They recognized the only way to solve that problem was to commission new works. The Duo’s debut album, *Invisible Seams*,

features some of their early collaborations with composers. Then, with support from New Music USA, Even and Pierick launched SaxoVoce, a long-term commissioning project exploring the musical, dramatic, and theatrical possibilities inherent in the synthesis of saxophone and voice.

On Sunday, February 5 at 7:30 pm at Historic St. John’s in Ohio City, the Syndicate for The New Arts will present [Ogni Suono](#) in a concert featuring works written for their SaxoVoce project.

“We’re excited because this is the first full program of music from that commissioning project,” Even said. The program will include Christopher Dietz’s *My Manifesto and Me*, Zach Sheets’s *dare-gale, speaks and spells*, Erin Rogers’ *Clamor*, Kate Soper’s *Ototoi*, Ruby Fulton’s *Isto Ista*, and David Coll’s *Ask*, all from 2015 or 2016.

“Early on we worked with composers we knew and enjoyed working with,” Even said. “But for SaxoVoce, we looked for composers who were interested in writing for the combination of saxophone and voice. The only thing we told them was that they had to use our voices in their pieces.”

The duo supplied sound samples of their voices, but once the compositions began to arrive, it became clear that there was still a lot of workshopping that needed to be done. Even and Pierick recorded the pieces and sent them to the composers so they could hear what the duo were and were not capable of doing.

They also discovered that it was fatiguing to go back and forth between playing and singing. “In *My Manifesto and Me*, Christopher Dietz uses the structure of the Rifleman’s Creed but changed some of the text,” said Even. “We have to deliver the words convincingly. And at the end there is a quote from Albert Camus’s *Notebooks*: ‘The need to be right is the sign of a vulgar mind.’”

The following are short descriptions of the other works on the program.

During Kate Soper’s *Ototoi*, the players use their instruments and voices to dramatize the dialogue between the terror of the future and the dread of the present as expressed in Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*.

With circles of instrumental racket, vocal noise, and fragments from somewhere in between, Erin Rogers’ *Clamor* for two vocalizing saxophonists is an eight-minute over-saturation of human and instrument.

The title of Ruby Fulton’s *Isto Ista* comes from a Croatian saying for “same same.” The music explores the vulnerable relationship between what is imagined (the vocal parts) and what is real (the saxophone parts), taking rhythmic inspiration from the Haitian Vodou drumming tradition.

Inspired by the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins, Zach Sheets uses the contours of the performers’ voices as seeds from which the melodic shapes bloom in his *dare-gale, speaks and spells*.

The performers become actors in a quasi-nonsensical argument that devolves into absurdity in David Coll’s *Ask*.

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